

stay in contact. The boys told me that while they don't agree on everything they still work together to find a solution to whatever problem may arise, they are able to work it out.

Mr. Speaker, whether they are Arab or Jew, Greek or Turkish, Protestant or Catholic, Indian or Pakistani, bringing people together will achieve a lasting return in understanding and toleration.

I firmly believe that by working together, conflict can be overcome. The United States Congress, and our country should continue to support these people to people partnerships, which lay the groundwork for cooperation, co-existence and ultimately peace in the future.

#### TRIBUTE TO FRED AND ROXY LIGRANI

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to recognize Fred and Roxy Ligrani of Grand Junction, Colorado. As farmers, Fred and Roxy have spent six decades working tirelessly to feed their fellow countrymen. They are making a difference in their community and touching the lives of their many neighbors in the Grand Valley. I would like to honor their accomplishments today before this body of Congress and this nation.

For the Ligrani brothers, farming runs in their blood; they grew up tending vegetables. Fred and Roxy's grandfather, Rocco, bought land in Grand Junction and developed it as a homestead in 1906. Respect and appreciation for the land, as well as knowledge of how best to cultivate it, are a rich heritage that the Ligrani family passes on from generation to generation.

Fred and Roxy's dedication to farming is evident from their customer's loyalty. The Ligranis have been recognized by American Vegetable Grower Magazine three times in the past. Even as the Grand Valley becomes urbanized, the Ligrani brothers remain focused on producing quality produce. They have maintained this dedication for 60 years.

Mr. Speaker, Fred and Roxy Ligrani have shown an extraordinary dedication to the citizens of Grand Junction. Their strenuous efforts offer hope to a world that is increasingly dependent on technology. These two talented and determined men are a shining example of the rewards of hard work and perseverance. It is my great honor to recognize the Ligranis before this body of Congress and this nation today. I wish them all the best in the future.

#### TRIBUTE TO MR. CHARLES P. IVERSEN

**HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I would like to call your attention to an exceptional individual who I have long been proud to call my friend, Mr. Charles P. Iversen. On Friday, November 21, 2003, members of the Plumber's Union Local No. 14 will celebrate Charlie Iversen's

retirement from the union by coming together to pay tribute to Charlie and his lifelong commitment to and leadership in the labor movement.

Over the past 45 years, Charlie Iversen has worked tirelessly on behalf of the men, women, and families in Plumber's Local No. 14. Using his administrative experience and talent for creative leadership to greatly improve the work environment and expand the business interests for plumbers throughout Northern New Jersey, Charlie has left an indelible mark on the lives of many, demonstrating the positive difference that a single person can make. It is therefore only fitting that he be recognized in this, the permanent record of the greatest freely elected body on earth.

In 1955, Charlie Iversen embarked upon what would become a distinguished career in the field of plumbing engineering when he took a position with William Zabransky Jr., Inc. During his time in the employ of William Zabransky, Charlie joined Local No. 326 as an Apprentice, and pursued certification in a UA Training Program at Purdue University. Upon his graduation from Purdue, he became an instructor at Plumber's Local No. 14 Training School while continuing to augment his own personal education at Kean College, Rutgers University, William Paterson College, and Fairleigh Dickinson University.

In 1982, after 27 years as an esteemed employee of William Zabransky, Jr., Inc., Charlie was elected to the position of Business Agent of Plumber's Local No. 14. In this capacity, Charlie exhibited his diligence as an administrator and his boundless enthusiasm as a spokesman for the business interests of Local No. 14, leading him to be named the Union's Business Manager/Administrator in 1996.

Perhaps most inspiring is the way in which Charlie Iversen has balanced his love for his work with his interest in furthering the cause of the labor movement. As an active member of the American Society of Plumbing Engineers, a former Vice President of the New Jersey State Association of Pipe Trades, a Trustee of Plumber's Local No. 14 Pension, Welfare, Education, and Annuity Funds, and a Treasurer of Local No. 14's Political Action Committee, Charlie has worked hard to ensure that members of Local No. 14 receive the representation and benefits that they deserve. Through word and deed, Charlie has spent the last 45 years demonstrating that the only real success in life comes from a whole-hearted commitment to serving the members of the community in which you live and work.

Mr. Speaker, the job of a United States Congressman involves so much that is rewarding, yet nothing compares to recognizing the extraordinary efforts of individuals like Charlie Iversen. I ask that you join our colleagues, the members of the Plumber's Union Local No. 14, Charlie's family and friends, and me in recognizing Charles P. Iversen for his outstanding service to the families of Local 14.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE ALTOONA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**HON. BILL SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Altoona Symphony Orchestra

on its 75th Anniversary and to thank the organization for the high-quality music with which it has provided its community.

The Gearhart String Ensemble was founded in the early years of the twentieth century upon the tradition of the early railroad bands and orchestras that were abundant throughout central Pennsylvania at that time. In 1928, the then strictly volunteer orchestra compiled of 24 musicians made its debut under the direction of Russell Gearhart. Since then, it has grown to employ more than 75 musicians and was renamed the Altoona Symphony Orchestra.

Although 75 years have passed, the orchestra maintains its youthful fervor with its diverse repertoire and inspiring attitude. The constantly changing roster of nationally and internationally renowned guest artists renders a different sound for every concert, keeping the audience attentive and entertained. With this vast array of musical talent, the symphony orchestra provides an invaluable cultural experience to the communities of Central Pennsylvania through its mastery of classical music pieces.

The orchestra continues to produce music that rivals the masterful and highly acclaimed sound of the Boston Pops, and is recognized as one of the outstanding Pennsylvania symphony orchestras. As a result of the dedicated, hard work of its Board of Trustees, the orchestra has progressed immensely, and it will undoubtedly continue to do so under its guidance and leadership. I congratulate the Altoona Symphony Orchestra on a wonderful 75 years and look forward to its sounds of tomorrow.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent from this Chamber on November 17, 2003. I would like the record to show that, had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall votes 620, 621, 622 and 623.

#### HONORING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRE FIGHTERS

**HON. HILDA L. SOLIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the courage of fire fighters from Los Angeles County Fire Department. Firefighters in my community, from the cities of Azusa, Baldwin Park, Bradbury, Claremont, Covina, Duarte, El Monte, Glendora, Irwindale, Rosemead, San Dimas, South El Monte, Temple and Unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County, fought the fires and saved the lives and homes of countless people. Had it not been for the rapid response and bravery of firefighters, the loss of life, the damage to residents, housing, and commercial property would have been much worse.

I am hopeful that if we learn one lesson from this horrible disaster, it will be that more

financial resources need to go towards helping fire departments protect people. According to the Forest Service, more than 90 percent of wild land fires are the result of human activity, and fires are almost twice as likely to start near roads than in the wilderness.

Even though they are adjacent to some of America's largest communities, Southern California forests only receive a fraction of the money they need to manage fire every year. Last year, Southern California forests received only \$4 million out of the \$53 million spent on California fire reduction—a mere 8 percent of the fire funding distributed to California's National Forests.

The Southern California fires demonstrate that the federal government must spend its fire management dollars near communities. Firefighters should not be put in harms way when we can prevent future tragedies by making communities near forest areas.

Our Nation is blessed with brave men and women who protect our homeland from every potential danger and the risk of their own safety to demonstrate their commitment to the state of California. They are true American heroes and I thank them on behalf of my constituents.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a clarification to my voting record. I returned early this morning from a Congressional Delegation trip to Iraq. Unfortunately, while I was away, I was unable to cast a recorded vote on three measures passed yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of:

S.J. Res. 22—A resolution recognizing the Agriculture Research Service of the Dept of Agriculture.

S.J. Res. 18—A resolution commending the Inspectors General.

H. Con. Res. 299—Honoring Mr. Sargent Shriver.

#### SENSE OF THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION TO COMBAT OBSTETRIC FISTULA

#### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to introduce a Sense of the Congress resolution which will draw attention to a tragedy which affects thousands of women around the world each year.

Obstetric fistula is a major pregnancy-related complication. It occurs when a woman is in obstructed and prolonged labor without medical help. The prolonged pressure of the baby's head against the mother's pelvis cuts off the blood supply to the soft tissues surrounding her bladder, rectum, and vagina. Because of the prolonged and difficult labor, the baby usually dies. However, if the mother survives, the physical and emotional con-

sequences are devastating. The injured tissue soon rots away, leaving a perforation, or fistula which causes the woman to lose control over urination and/or bowel function. Because of a lack of understanding about the cause and treatment of fistulas, women who are fistula sufferers are often abandoned by their husbands, forced out of their homes, and ostracized by family.

Although currently virtually unknown in the western world, fistulas were once common in the United States and Europe before the advent of widespread maternal healthcare and hospital births. The current estimates of one million fistula sufferers may be very conservative. Actual sufferers may number over 3 million throughout the developing world. This suffering can be readily ameliorated with reconstructive surgery. Fistula surgical repair has up to a 90 percent success rate and ranges in cost from \$100–\$400. Although this surgery is inexpensive by American standards, for women in the developing world, this cost is prohibitive. Even if the surgery is affordable, many women in developing countries are either unaware of treatment options or unable to access treatment.

A recent report, *Obstetric Fistula Needs Assessment: Findings from Nine African Countries*, commissioned by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) details fistula occurrence in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Benin, Chad, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia. There are currently 35 hospitals in the aforementioned countries which have the capacity to conduct fistula surgery, but are without the financial resources.

The United States House of Representatives should address this issue. To that end, I am introducing a Sense of the Congress Resolution which acknowledges the need of the U.S. government to take steps to end the needless suffering of these women.

I request that my colleagues support this bill.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE HUNTINGDON LADY BEARCATS

#### HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Huntingdon Lady Bearcats on their PIAA, Class AA volleyball State championship.

The Bearcats overcame the odds against them and handily defeated their competition in the tournament. United behind their strong coach, Priscilla Gibboney, the high school girls got everyone involved in each match, allowing the underestimated team to hand out losses to taller, more experienced opponents.

The Huntingdon Lady Bearcats have claimed two team State championship titles in the school's history, which is a great testimony to the unique character of this team. They fought through obstacles and kept their composure, and their unwillingness to quit led to their perseverance. I congratulate the Huntingdon Lady Bearcats on their State championship and I look forward to hearing of their continued success in next year's season.

Led by head coach Priscilla Gibboney and assistant coach David Kemp, the 13 members

of this championship team include Seniors Tara McMinn (Captain), Megan Goss, Laura Madden, Meredith Orr, Katie Criswell, Jordan Rackley, and Sara Kylor; Juniors Hadley Hammers, Bethany Kozak, and Jenna Sheffield; Sophomores Olivia Hallahan and Emily Kemp; and Freshman Greta Gibboney. Congratulations one and all.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I was tending to official business and was not present for Roll Call Votes 620 through 623. The votes were on Senate Joint Resolutions 22 and 18, House Concurrent Resolution 299, and on a motion to the meeting time of the House, respectively. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on these measures.

#### TRIBUTE TO MOTHER ESSIE BAXTER JONES

#### HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, November 18, 2003*

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Mother Essie Baxter Jones, for her 100th birthday celebration.

Mother Essie Baxter Jones was born the third of nine children on March 23, 1903 in Kilgore, Texas, Gregg County, Route 1. In 1903, Route 1 was simply a horse and buggy trail; today, it is a superhighway, Highway 1252. Growing up, she worked on a farm where she learned about growing cotton, corn, peanuts, white potatoes, sweet potatoes and watermelons, and also helped her father build churches throughout the community.

Later on, she operated a successful family store and café for those who came to work in the oil fields in Kilgore and afterward built her own café in Odessa, Texas. She also worked in the defense industry sewing tents and cooking for the soldiers in Waco, Texas.

Having moved here in 1963, Mother Essie Baxter Jones has been a resident of San Jose, California for 40 years and, throughout that time, she has been actively involved in the community, including her work in the Prayer Garden Church of God in Christ and Templo Juan 3:16 in San Jose, California.

Her "secrets" for lifelong happiness are: "Honor, obey and respect your mother and father; trust in the Lord and obey His Word; deal fairly with everyone; and save some of the money that you earn."

I want to thank Mother Essie Baxter Jones for her many years of service to our community and congratulate her on this milestone birthday, her 100th. Much has changed for the better during her lifetime and she contributed to the positive changes. May God bless her with years of happiness and service.